



U.S. Immigration
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News Release

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CONNECTICUT ICE AGENT GIVEN NATIONAL AWARD FOR SPEARHEADING PROBE THAT TARGETED ILLEGAL MILITARY EXPORTS TO CHINA

NEW HAVEN, CT – Michael J. Garcia, Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), today announced that the International Organization of Asian Crime Investigators and Specialists has selected ICE Senior Special Agent Maryann Francischelli as the recipient of its 2005 Outstanding Advocate Award of Law Enforcement in Asian Organized Crime.

Ms. Francischelli is a senior special agent with the ICE Resident Agent-in-Charge office in New Haven, Connecticut. She is scheduled to be presented with the award tonight at a ceremony during the second annual International Conference on Asian Organized Crime and Terrorism at the Mohegan Sun Resort in Connecticut.

Agent Franciscelli was selected for the award based upon her outstanding work as the ICE case agent in an investigation targeting a network that illegally exported military engines for the Black Hawk helicopter from the United States to the People's Republic of China. The investigation specifically targeted Kwonhwan Park (a.k.a. Howard Park) a citizen of South Korea, and others for violations of the Arms Export Control Act in connection with the illegal export of helicopter engines to China.

"This award and all of its accolades are truly deserved by Senior Special Agent Francischelli," said ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Robin M. Avers. "Her tenacity in pursuing this extremely complex and highly technical investigation truly shows her commitment to the security of our country. Agent Francischelli is a fine example of the dedicated employees we have working for ICE and protecting the homeland everyday."

On November 9, 2004, Park pleaded guilty to one count of violating the Arms Export Control Act (Title 22, U.S.C. Section 2778), one count of conspiracy to violate the Arms Export Control Act (title 18 U.S.C. Section 371), and making false statements (Title 18, U.S.C. Section 1001) in the District of Connecticut. Park has not yet been sentenced.

The investigation also helped result in the successful prosecution of Yung Jean Sohn, a former South Korean military official, by South Korean authorities. Sohn pleaded guilty in South Korea to forgery of official documents and received an eight-month term of imprisonment.

As disclosed in court proceedings, for more than two years, Park was the subject of an investigation by Special Agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), after he and his Malaysian company, SGS, attempted to purchase Black Hawk military helicopter engines from Helicopter Support International, a company affiliated with Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford, Connecticut (the manufacturer of the Black Hawk helicopter).

Throughout 2001, Park and others provided documents to the U.S. Department of State asserting that the engines, worth more than \$1 million each, were destined for the Malaysian Army or the Korean Army. Park and SGS went so far as to submit sworn end-user certificates, with signatures from purported Malaysian and Korean military officials, claiming that the engines were for use by the Malaysian military and Korean Army.

Subsequent investigation by New Haven ICE agents in the United States and abroad confirmed that the signatures were fraudulent. The investigation revealed that two engines were actually shipped on April 8, 2002, arrived in Malaysia, and later were diverted to China. At that point, ICE agents had not been alerted to the shipment.

As the investigation continued, Park and his associates attempted to obtain four additional engines for the S70 Sikorsky military helicopter. Acting on a suspicion, General Electric, the manufacturer of the engines, notified agents in New Haven. According to statements made in open court by the prosecutor, Park attested that the four additional engines were destined for the South Korean Army. Previous investigation by ICE agents had already confirmed that the South Korean Army had never ordered the engines.

Last year, ICE agents were alerted on short notice that Park intended to enter the United States through San Francisco on March 27, 2004. ICE and DCIS agents tracked his movements and intercepted Park on April 1, 2004, at Dulles International Airport when he attempted to depart the United States on a plane bound for Beijing, China. An inspection of Park's luggage confirmed that he had in his checked bag and on his person a sophisticated night vision goggle system that was manufactured by a San Francisco, California corporation, and is a military item controlled for export.

Park was arrested based on a Complaint that was prepared and executed in the District of Connecticut at Bridgeport. A United States Magistrate Judge in Alexandria, Virginia, ordered Park detained and removed to the District of Connecticut. Park arrived in Connecticut on May 7, 2004, and has been detained without bond since that date.

In November 2004, Park pleaded guilty to Counts 1 and 2 of a four-count Indictment returned by a federal grand jury sitting in Bridgeport. Park faces a maximum term of imprisonment of ten years on the illegal export charge and a maximum term of imprisonment of five years on the conspiracy charge. Park also faces a maximum fine of \$2,500,000.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.